



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

El Malpais
National Monument

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El Malpais News Release

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For Immediate Release

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El Malpais National Monument Cave Closure Continues

The closure of all caves at El Malpais National Monument remains in effect during 2013 while park staff finalizes a cave access permitting system, according to Superintendent Kayci Cook Collins. “While the closure of all caves within the monument boundaries is still in effect, monument staff are working to allow access to select caves for recreational use by this summer,” continues Collins.

Natural Resources Branch Chief David Hays explained that research gathered during the last several years is being evaluated to identify caves that are interesting, diverse, and accessible, but where bat populations and fragile rock formations will not be harmed. “We want cavers to have a great experience and see the unique and special features that exist within lava tube caves,” he said. “We are going through the public planning process to develop a system so that several caves can be accessed with a free permit,” he said.

“We hope to have a draft permitting plan available for public review and feedback as soon as possible, but we have to make sure have everything in place before doing so,” said Hays. An announcement will be made when the process is complete.

As a preventative measure to preserve cave environments, protect bats and slow the spread of white nose syndrome, all caves at El Malpais National Monument were closed effective December 6, 2010 .

For more information regarding the cave closure or White Nose Syndrome contact El Malpais National Monument Natural Resource Branch Chief David Hays by phone at (505) 285-4641 x26 ; by email at Dave_Hays@NPS.gov; or by mail at 123 E. Roosevelt, Grants, NM 87020.

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